



November 14, 2011

## **Are you USA PROUD? Who Named America?**

**It's time! ARE YOU READY?** Let's share the "Spirit of Amerigo" 500 years of Invention and Ingenuity with millions of people worldwide. The 2012 year begins the monumental 500th Anniversary of America's namesake Amerigo Vespucci's death on February 22 – the Atlantic Ocean navigator–explorer of Spain and Portugal. March 5th is the 500th anniversary of the birth of geographer Gerardus Mercator in Flanders, Belgium.

Accept this invitation to commemorate the 500th anniversary of the Amerigo Vespucci on Feb. 22 – in Spain and Portugal – and Gerardus Mercator at Brussels (we have confirmed the Belgium Poste stamp issue). Celebrate the Renaissance milestone of "America on the Map" to expand world understanding of the rise of modern geography in planetary science.

In 2007, the worldwide 500th anniversary began in Friburg–Germany and Ville St. Die–France with the commemoration of Martin Waldseemüller's famous 1507 world map. It is the first to use the word America in reference to the Western Hemisphere. Waldseemüller named this area America to honor the explorer Amerigo Vespucci whose accounts of his travels to this area was the basis for much of the map.

**The Vespucci astronomy**, from voyages of Atlantic Ocean exploration for Spain and Portugal, **resulted in the math calculation** on the equator to measure the distance between planets and the earth's circumference. **This milestone – the cornerstone of modern planetary science – has no parallel.** He then deduced the existence of a new land unknown to Europeans, not of Asia or Africa. In 1507 at **Ville St. Die, France, the German cartographer Martin Waldseemüller** used this measurement in the cartographic grid for his 16th Century projection of earth that first depicted the new continent unknown to Europeans – not of Asia – and the new western ocean. He used Gutenberg's invention: the printing press. The globe map energized the thirst for knowledge in new generations. Columbus died in 1504 – believing he'd sailed to Asia.

Mercator is vital to this story because on his 1538 world map, for the first time, North and South America were designated separately as *Americae pars septentrionalis* and *Americae pars meridionalis*, putting to rest any disagreement about the name of the Americas.

The "Spirit of Amerigo" inspired Mercator to name both continents, America. It is appropriate that the world honor the Florentine native Amerigo Vespucci – the person whose name has been applied to this hemisphere – as Spain & Portugal's navigator and explorer.

**Let's not miss this once-in-history 21st Century opportunity** to commemorate the America500 Birthday Extravaganza 2012–13. Bring Home The Knowledge of History & Creativity. The Who Named America? Movement" delivers authentic experiences to "Celebrate America In Your Town!" that inspires community learning and enterprise, across our country!

**Champion a "Smarter Planet",**

Riccardo Gaudino, Director–historian

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